

Remarks by Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr
Pencil Donation by Newell Rubbermaid
November 8, 2010 Aurora Quezon Elementary

Magandang umaga. Good morning. First, I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to Aurora Quezon Elementary School for hosting us -- it's great to be here.

I am very happy to represent the U.S. Government in this great initiative to distribute over 1 million Mongol pencils to schoolchildren all over the Philippines. By donating these pencils, our American company -- Newell Rubbermaid -- is showing that good corporate citizenship is alive and well.

Through our U.S. Agency for International Development, we will also do our part to ensure that these pencils go to those who need them most. I would also like to recognize the Philippine Intellectual Property Office for supporting the Mongol trademark, and making possible this donation today.

This initiative is an example of how private companies like Newell and civic groups like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts can team with government to meet educational needs all around the country.

A pencil is a simple tool, yet it symbolizes many things -- access to education, communication, and innovation.

Let me ask you kids: You will be receiving many pencils today, but do you know how far you can go with just one? Did you know that you can draw a line 55 kilometers long with only one pencil? That is the distance between Manila and Tagaytay.

And if you used all of these pencils to draw a line around the Earth...how many times around do you think you could go? With the million Mongol pencils donated today, you could go around the Earth 1, 372 times!

For those aspiring writers out there -- you will be able to write about 45,000 words with one pencil. If you're writing a novel -- which is usually about 100,000 words -- that means you can write an entire book with just three pencils...and have two-thirds of your pencil to spare.

I look forward to reading the next great Filipino novel, which may be written with one of these very pencils by someone in this very room.
Thank you very much. *Maraming salamat!*